

Today's News - Thursday, October 18, 2012

- Gendall profiles Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects and how the expanding influence of landscape represents a fundamentally different way of thinking about urbanism.
- Kimmelman comes up with a concept to save Goldberg's Prentice Women's Hospital, and Jeanne Gang runs with it (and it's beautiful!).
- Becker pens an eloquent letter to Chicago's mayor re: Prentice: "Northwestern knows only how to destroy and replace, with the kind of faceless mediocrity that sucks all the air out of the very idea of inviting, liveable urban space" (with pix that prove it).
- On a more technical note, a fascinating look at "two unsexy issues raised in Northwestern's reuse study: floor load and floor vibration."
- A key alderman is likely to support Prentice demolition, "striking a blow to preservationists," though he remains open to suggestions: "if there's a eureka moment, I'm all ears" (let's hope he reads Kimmelman!).
- Wainwright x 2: he takes issue with the latest proposal for London's historic Smithfield market: it "will leave only a flimsy skin of heritage, a picturesque skirt of Victoriana around the base of yet another slab of generic commercial development."
- He queries Dittmar re: plans for locals to build their own houses on the Balmoral estate in Scotland: "So can we expect a Highland Poundbury, all turrets and towers in the Scottish baronial style? 'No.'"
- Moore is most cheered by "an inspiring community self-build project" for a children's non-profit by two architecture students that "offers a glimpse of the galvanizing power of doing it yourself. There are signs now that self-build is coming back into fashion...it's worth hoping for."
- Brussat says it's time to reform historic preservation: "Brutalism is best preserved with the tools of scholarship, photography and bulldozers."
- Jacobs looks at a sticky wicket: "How do you mandate superior "design" in a planning document? As admirable as it might seem to embed the notion of beauty in the zoning code, it would be a lot like planting a landmine."
- Kent is quite taken by Williams and Tsien's Logan Center - no "starved minimalism" here: it's "spare and modern, but rich in detail with imaginative connections...originality was written into the program from the beginning."
- A new ULI report, "Housing in America: The Baby Boomers Turn 65," outlines trends that are "creating niche markets that could become significant in size" for the U.S. housing industry.
- Stead takes a closer look at the "underbelly of infrastructure," and "what is it about underpasses that is so appealing to architects."
- The newest leg of Atlanta's 22-mile Beltline Park built upon an abandoned railway corridor is ready for its close-up.
- Welton has a most interesting conversation with Botta re: his recent focus on "artisans who now are creating sophisticated spaces out of ordinary materials, and on fellow architects who design from the heart for the common man."
- Balmond's "Snow Words" is "an intriguing art piece" that pulsates with light (great video).
- Niemeyer is hospitalized - again.

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Prime Time for Landscape Architects: Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects Masters the New Collaborations: The expanding influence of landscape represents a fundamentally different way of thinking about urbanism. By John Gendall [images] - ArchNewsNow

A Vision to Avoid Demolition for '70s Pioneer: Jeanne Gang draws up a plan to try to save the outmoded, late-Modernist Prentice Women's Hospital...a groundbreaking, wonderful oddball...So here is a suggestion: Build a research tower on top...Northwestern needs to avoid the ignominy of having torn down a landmark. And sometimes a third way is the best way. By Michael Kimmelman -- Bertrand Goldberg; Studio Gang Architects [images] - New York Times

An open letter to Mayor Emanuel on Bertrand Goldberg's Prentice Hospital - a few truths versus one Big Lie: Northwestern knows only how to destroy and replace, with the kind of faceless mediocrity that sucks all the air out of the very idea of inviting, liveable urban space...it's wrong for [it] to hijack the legal process carefully put in place to consider landmark designations, simply because they are powerful and connected. By Lynn Becker [images] - Repeat (Chicago)

Prentice Hospital's Bad Vibrations and Northwestern's Bad Architectural Vibes: Northwestern's architectural record around the hotly debated hospital is cause for concern when it comes to the future of the site, but when discussing the future use of architecture, engineering can't be ignored...Landmarks Illinois has published a widely cited plan for reusing the building. But it doesn't address two unsexy issues raised in Northwestern's reuse study: floor load and floor vibration. - Chicago Magazine

Key alderman likely to support Prentice demolition: "...striking a blow to preservationists trying to spare Prentice from demolition..."I remain open to suggestions. And believe me, if there's a eureka moment, I'm all ears. The last thing I want to do is take down important architecture in the central business district." -- Bertrand Goldberg; Antunovich Associates - Chicago Tribune

Smithfield plans will 'destroy grandest parade of market buildings in Europe': Save Britain's Heritage speaks out against the latest plans for London's historic Smithfield market..."It's another scoop-out job"...will leave only a flimsy skin of heritage, a picturesque skirt of Victoriana around the base of yet another slab of generic commercial development. By Oliver Wainwright -- Horace Jones (1883); John McAslan [images] - Guardian (UK)

Self-build in Balmoral? The Queen lends a hand to the housing crisis: A new plan by the Prince's Foundation will see locals building their own houses on the Balmoral estate in Scotland...So can we expect a Highland Poundbury, all turrets and towers in the Scottish baronial style? "No," says Hank Dittmar. By Oliver Wainwright - Guardian (UK)

Oasis Children's Venture: An inspiring community self-build project offers a glimpse of the galvanizing power of doing it yourself...There are signs now that self-build is coming back into fashion...suits the current mood of improvisation and doing much with little...there are mutterings of some self-build being encouraged around the Olympic park...I'm not holding my breath...But the Oasis building gives a glimpse of why it's worth hoping for. By Rowan Moore -- Walter Segal; Matt Atkins; Ben Barfield Marks [images] - Observer (UK)

Time to reform historic preservation: ...the attention of many professional preservationists has strayed, focusing on how to preserve buildings few people care about...Brutalism is best preserved with the tools of scholarship, photography and bulldozers...The crusade...to rescue modernist buildings puts preservation's accomplishments at risk. By David Brussat -- Castellucci, Galla & Planka (1967) [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Uttering the D-Word: How do you mandate superior "design" or even "beauty" in a planning document? As admirable as it might seem to embed the notion of beauty in the zoning code, it would be a lot like planting a landmine. By Karrie Jacobs - Metropolis Magazine

Logan Center for the Performing Arts serving varied uses with ease: Williams and Tsien do not serve up a diet of starved minimalism...The center is spare and modern, but rich in detail with imaginative connections among intelligently, yet surprisingly, placed volumes...originality was written into the program from the beginning. By Cheryl Kent -- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects - Chicago Tribune

New ULI Report, "Housing In America: The Baby Boomers Turn 65" Explores Opportunities, Challenges In Housing The Nation's Older Citizens: Aging but active baby boomers, as well as the generations before them, are creating new opportunities and challenges for the U.S. housing industry...Beyond traditional seniors housing...exploring a diverse mix of living options, creating niche markets that could become significant in size... - Urban Land Institute (ULI)

Under Overpasses: What is it about underpasses that is so appealing to architects and theorists alike? From psychogeography to 'terrain vague', Naomi Stead takes a closer look at the underbelly of infrastructure. -- Ignasi de Solà-Morales; Rem Koolhaas; Anthony Vidler [images]- Australian Design Review

Beltline a walk in the park: ..."the most significant step forward yet" in the long-awaited Beltline, a projected 22-mile loop in central Atlanta built upon abandoned railway corridor...The Eastside Trail...is not officially the first section to open...But [others don't] sit on the old rail bed and neither have the cache of traversing and connecting historic Atlanta. -- Ryan Gravel; Perkins+Will [images]- Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Mario Botta: The Craft of Modernism: As a young designer, he worked as an assistant to both Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn...Of late...he's been focusing not just on monumental design, but on the artisans who now are creating sophisticated spaces out of ordinary materials, and on fellow architects who design from the heart for the common man. By J. Michael Welton -- Solano Benitez; Francis Kere; Bijoy Jain/Studio Mumbai [images]- Huffington Post

Pulsating light show in Alaska: Cecil Balmond's "Snow Words"...an artwork for the Crime Detection Laboratory in Anchorage...an intriguing art piece that also addressed an aspect of the fallen hero... [images, video]- World Architecture News (UK)

Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer hospitalized: ...information on his condition and the reasons for his hospitalization were not immediately available. - Miami Herald



-- Grieg Architects: Oseana - Art & Culture Center, Os (Bergen), Norway
-- 3XN: The Arch, Mandal, Norway
-- Wingårdh Arkitektkontor: Spira Performing Arts Center, Jönköping, Sweden

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